AN

EPISTLE

TO THE REVEREND

Mr GEORGE WHITEFIELD:

Written in the YEAR MDCCLV.

By CHARLES WESLEY, *A. M.*
Late Student of *Christ-Church*, OXFORD.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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EPISTLE

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Mr GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

COME on, my WHITEFIELD! (ſince the ſtrife is paſt,
And friends at firſt are friends again at laſt)
Our hands, and hearts, and counſels let us join
In mutual league, t'advance the work Divine,
Our one contention now, our ſingle aim,
To pluck poor ſouls as brands out of the flame;
To ſpread the victory of that bloody croſs,
And gaſp our lateſt breath in the Redeemer's cauſe.

Too long, alas! we gave to Satan place,
When party-zeal put on an angel's face,
Too long we liſt'ned to the couz'ning fiend,
Whoſe trumpet ſounded, "For the faith contend!"

With haſty blindfold rage, in error's night,
How did we with our fellow-ſoldiers fight!
We could not then our father's children know,
But each miſtook his brother for his foe.
"Foes to the truth, can you in conſcience ſpare?
"Tear them, (the tempter cry'd) in pieces, tear!"
So thick the darkneſs, ſo confus'd the noiſe,
We took the ſtranger's for the Shepherd's voice;
Raſh nature wav'd the controverſial ſword,
On fire to fight the battles of the LORD,
Fraternal love from every breaſt was driv'n,
And bleeding Charity return'd to heaven.

The SAVIOUR ſaw our ſtrife with pitying eye,
And caſt a look that made the ſhadows fly:
Soon as the day-ſpring in his preſence ſhone,
We found the two fierce armies were but one;
Common our hope, and family, and name,
Our arms, our Captain, and our crown the ſame,
Inliſted all beneath IMMANUEL'S ſign,
And purchas'd every ſoul with precious blood divine.

Then let us cordially again embrace,
Nor e'er infringe the league of goſpel-grace;
Let us in JESUS' name to battle go,
And turn our arms againſt the common foe;

Fight

Fight ſide by ſide beneath our Captain's eye,
Chaſe the Philiſtines, on their ſhoulders fly,
And, more than conquerors, in the harneſs die.

For whether I am born to "*bluſh above*,"
On earth ſuſpicious of electing love,
Or you, o'erwhelm'd with honourable ſhame,
To ſhout the univerſal SAVIOUR's Name,
It matters not; if, all our conflicts paſt,
Before the great white throne we meet at laſt:
Our only care, while ſojourning below,
Our real Faith by real Love to ſhow:
To blaſt the aliens' hope, and let them ſee
How friends of jarring ſentiments agree:
Not in a party's narrow banks confin'd,
Not by a ſameneſs of opinions join'd,
But cemented with the Redeemer's blood,
And bound together in the heart of GOD.

Can we forget from whence our union came,
When firſt we ſimply met in JESUS' name?
The name myſterious of the GOD UNKNOWN,
Whoſe ſecret love allur'd, and drew us on
Thro' a long, lonely, legal wilderneſs,
To find the promis'd land of goſpel peace.

True

True yoke-fellows, we then agreed to draw
Th' intolerable burden of the Law,
And jointly lab'ring on with zealous ſtrife,
Strengthen'd each other's hands to work *for* Life:
To turn againſt the world our ſteady face,
And, valiant for the truth, enjoy diſgrace.

Then, when we ſerv'd our God thro' fear alone,
Our views, our ſtudies, and our hearts were one;
No ſmalleſt difference damp'd the ſocial flame:
In Moſes' ſchool we thought, and ſpake the ſame:
And muſt we, now in Christ, with ſhame confeſs,
Our love was greater when our light was leſs?
When darkly thro' a glaſs with ſervile awe,
We firſt the ſpiritual commandment ſaw,
Could we not then, our mutual love to ſhow,
Thro' fire and water for each other go?
We could:—we did:—In a ſtrange land I ſtood,
And beckon'd thee to croſs th' Atlantic flood:
With true affection wing'd, thy ready mind,
Left country, fame, and eaſe, and friends behind,
And, eager all heav'n's counſels to explore,
Flew thro' the watry world and graſp'd the ſhore.

Nor

Nor did I linger, at my friend's deſire,
To tempt the furnace, and abide the fire:
When ſuddenly ſent forth, from the high-ways
I call'd poor outcaſts to the feaſt of grace;
Urg'd to purſue the work by thee begun,
Thro' good and ill report I ſtill ruſh'd on,
Nor felt the fire of popular applauſe,
Nor fear'd the tort'ring flame in ſuch a glorious cauſe.

Ah! wherefore did we ever ſeem to part,
Or claſh in ſentiment, while one in heart?
What dire device did the old Serpent find,
To put aſunder thoſe whom GOD had join'd?
From folly and ſelf-love Opinion roſe,
To ſever friends who never yet were foes;
To baffle and divert our nobleſt aim,
Confound our pride, and cover us with ſhame;
To make us bluſh beneath her ſhort-liv'd pow'r,
And glad the world with one triumphant hour.

But lo! the ſnare is broke, the captive's freed,
By Faith on all the hoſtile powers we tread,
And cruſh thro' JESUS' ſtrength the Serpent's head.
JESUS hath caſt the curſt Accuſer down,
Hath rooted up the tares by Satan ſown:

Kindled

Kindled anew the never-dying flame,
And re-baptiz'd our ſouls into his Name.
Soon as the virtue of his Name we feel,
The ſtorm of ſtrife ſubſides, the ſea is ſtill,
All nature bows to his benign command,
And two are one in his Almighty hand.
One in his hand, O may we ſtill remain,
Faſt bound with love's indiſſoluble chain;
(That adamant which time and death defies,
That golden chain which draws us to the ſkies!)
His love the tie that binds us to his throne,
His love the bond that perfects us in one;
His love (let all the ground of friendſhip ſee)
His only love conſtrains our hearts t'agree,
And gives the rivet of Eternity!

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THE END.